12/7/72

Dear Howard,

If I did not address this to you, for a special reason, I'd be making a note for the future, as a matter of record. The mailman forgot and took our mail from the post office. I'd planed to respond to the mail in the time between taking "il to tax school and picking her up, shortened to about an hour today by a pleasant luxury, getting a living "mas tree for her. I did not plan to do this memo now, but there is nothing unpleasant for that hour, so I do. It is a consequence of a refreshing if tiring walk on a cold morning(20°), with no wind and a warming sun, right after it crossed the horizon.

The air was and is clear, and it seemed to have that effect on my head. There was nothing in particular I wanted to think through. So, my mind wandered, and into it popped that "obile piece on Cyril the "onderful that + re d last night. It prompted retrospection on the whole mess. I do not pretend I am without questions about some aspects and participants, but for the most part there is no longer room for equivocation. All in all, it is perhaps the severest indictment of the critical community yet, explaining why we have accomplished so little, why so much time has been wasted, why there is little need for the kind of omnipresent surveillance the nuts have conjectured from the first.

I presume this has, to a degree, been on your mind from your sending the Napoleon quote. All of us, in varying degrees, enjoy being right. Some of us more than others long to be. I suppose I fall in this group. I don't think for wrong ego reasons but because I want my work to be right.

If there is one of the critical community who is not far above average in intelligence, I can't think of him or her now. Some like Sylvia and Hoch, are close to brilliant. Dick is truly exceptional but has not been able to spend the time on the work the others have. There is a much larger band, if I don't refer to all by name.

But not one thought the thing through, independently or at my prodding. As you know from your own experience, I made the effort and took what time others wanted when they had had time for independent thought. Some have since lied about it. My apprehension did not begin after the fact, nor close to it, when Graham phoned and you were here. It was during the summer of 1971, for I knew Cyril would have the attitude he subsequently disclosed from the character of our correspondence. I fell short in my evaluation, for he was more irresponsible and more dishonest. Even more unthinking. I suppose I expected him to engage in a dialogue, as none would. My first recollection of forcing a dialogue was with the CIA. Bob Smith had been engaged in an inquiry into the medical evidence for months. He didn't understand it after all that time. He was duplicating what I had already done, and after duplication, despite his IQ and degrees, understood far less than I had printed. No testimonial to Smith or the benefits of modern scientific education. Now I felt that he had not selected this area for study in vacuuo. It soon became clear that he was doing this for Cyril. This also told me more about Cyril, his judgement and objectives. Neither Bud nor Bob had any willingness to discuss the thing. I took Jim for a walk and instead of telling him what I believed asked him questions only. He answered them spontaneously. The only possible conclusion was what I had been saying to others, and he reached it-temporarily. He went along with the CIA egomaniacs. He alone of them shows any sign of unhappiness at the end result. Smith's concern was first manifested (second-hand knowledge) after the enquirer interview, when he drove to Pittsburgh to see Cyril about it. Judging from the "obile interview, it was a total waste of time and cost.

Of the others, you are the only one to engage in any dialogue. Ultimately, you came around to large areas of agreement. Sylvia was unresponsive, Hoch considered the whole thing a joke when he finally got around to responding, Gary and Jerry considered it properly addressed by thievery and other intellectual dishonesties of which Sylvia was part at least, Ned was a leader in the dirtier parts, Dick couldn't understand what I was driving at, Ed Williams disagreed and thought it a worthwhile effort, "ary never acknowledged (I later learned she was having the most serious problems within her family), and others unknown to you (like a richbitchs Mrs. "omerance, who pressured Marshall), did their own wrongheaded things. I consider the Spragues and the Berkleys unworthy of mention, but of them I need say nothing.

The simplest way to look at the record and what I've probably not noted of it is that I am saying how bright I am, how dumb others are. So so. This was so elemental that it is

not fit to consider it took any particular intelligence or insight. Besides, that would be pointless, ego-tripping. I am getting into the things of which I think you should think. I am not saying that all the others are stupid. Not one is. It is closer to say that the intellectuals can't be trusted because they are only intellectuals. Even those who deal with the pragmatic, and I consider Sylvia, Jerry and Gary, besides Cyril, examples. If I had different opinions of them I'd include Bud and Smith. Hoch is a gifted scientist, but he seems lost outside the laboratory approach, inconsistent as this is with his excellent record in pursuing hidden documents (he has been brilliant in some cases and seen what others have not). They remind me more, off the top of the head, of the ancient Yiddish scholars who were not scholars, they pondered the more arcane in the Torah, never agreeing on anything except disagreement, and considering what it was unimportant to consider. However, they and their associates were impressed with their scholarships and the need for it, and they were respected and supported. In reality, they were parasites. (If you haven't read Sholom Aleichen you should—he is the Yiddish Mark Twain, in some respects the superior. We have some if you want to borrow—ask Lil.) Or, fairies and needles people.

This also addresses why I have been able to do what collectively the others have not been able to. It is not that I am so unusually competent. It is, rather, that they are all utterly incompetent. And there is another and I think an important factor, emotions, which includes ambitions usually carefully hidden. I think you have seen enough of this, despite her effort to disguise, in Sylvia's attitude toward me. Garrison is another case. People who get interested in such a subject are either nuts or very serious people. The serious ones can too easily get lost in the endeavor and lose their perspective and balance in it. Here again, Sylvia is a conspicuous example, with her emotional involvements far exceeding what I think is jealousy of me. She got all wrapped up in younger men, first with Epstein (her first disclosure of contact with him coincides with my detecting a change in her attitude toward me and my work). She began by wanting only what it is good to want, the truth. She wound up trying to create "truth" and corrupting everything in her fine mind to this single end. She was dismayed at doing nothing, so she engaged in the predictably counterproductie and obviously dated childishness with Belin. Instead of learning from it she twisted her mind into justifications of it, authenticating it with a correct view of the dishonesty of hte press, and launched into the Cyril endeavor, all the time refusing to think about it and its probable consequences. It was enough for her, and again this is an emotional thing, that the end product would be anti-Kennedy. When this predictable and predicted end was the reality, the one thing all of her band agree upon is that it is worthwhile and justifies what they say they are not happy with. Ted was explicit enough on this long before the fact and Jerry could not have been more so after it. Most of the others, specifically Bud, feel the same way. This one, to them, plus, justifies all.

To this day, I have yet to get any kind of meaningful communication from any one of them. All Sylvia sent was that indictment of the intellect she addressed to Ed. Gary has confessed more than enough about intent and honesty and fell silent. Dick is an exception, but he was not one of them.

Among the other things this tells me is that it is a fiction to say the younger mind is like the younger body, the older mind like the older. Jerry and Paul are young, as is Gary is. Ted really falls in this group. But the only flexibility was yours. There is no relationship between physical and mental flexibility. I think it is impossible to find inflexibility more rigid than that of those I've named, and in each case I made a serious effort to get each to do some thinking. After the fact, no self-confrontation, no self-analysis, no confessions that are so good for the mind as well as the sould.

My own errors, and I am the oldest, lie in the opposite direction, in not conceiving the magnitude of the emotional involvements and the dishonesties and other evils they would sire.

Coinciding with all of this is another central fact: not one of these people was still doing original work. The CIAns are unworthy of serious mention, if they were "working". Not one except Hoch had come up with a single thing of value from that enormity in the Archives. (I think you understand I'm not lumping you with them.) This galled al . But I think the significant thing is that it is a measure of them and of them to themselves. As I said, we are talking about bright incompetents. Here I include Sylvia. You should have heard her rave about that grossly ignorant and really awful thing by Forman. It was enough for her that Forman accepted Tink as god, Tink being young enough for Sylvia's

emotional needs. (Bud was also ignorant. He used that shit in his brief in Hallock's court without showing it to me, which was disasterous, and failed to be a total disaster only because of the work I did that Cyril used.) How a mind like Sylvia's could accept such awful stuff as Forman's you should ask yourself.

Maybe I'm wrong, but I think in each case where a greater evil is not involved (and if I have no proof of any, I am aware of the possibilities), hidden guilt feelings figured. These were complicated by the sin you should recognize as a sin among the bright intellectuals, that of being right. It is a terrible sin if you are right and they have to face it. Among the obvious examples between Sylvia and me are Salandria, Thornley, Thompson, Epstein, Armoni, Fred Graham-yes-Sauvage and I'm sure others. The more I was right the lower the opinion she had of me, despite what she says. Garrison, strangely, is an exact parallel. In a more juvenile way this is clear with Jerry. Is there point in mentioning Ned and the basis of our separation, his lust for Kennedy blood at the least and as was obvious? I was harsh with Koch on Alvarez and pumpkins and the strange Olson, and he was wrong. (How inconsistent this is with his fine intelligence, that he would go for such stuff and participate in it.) Liston qualifies as insane, so there is no need to mention.

So, again it is not a case of brightness but of blindness. It required no genius to see the wrong. How, then, can such bright people not see the clearly wrong, and how can they never learn from any experience? The most stupid need but a single hot iron, but the bright rationalize.

To summarize, for I must stop now, the history of the critical community is one of personal selfishness, not cause selfishness; of stupidity by the bright, ~~xx~~ of inability to think clearly when all had the capacity; of pettiness ; of uncontrolled emotions and of emotional immaturity. ~~xtra~~ Plus, in a couple of cases, emotional illness.

Or, as I said to begin with, of self-condemnation.

Here I went for Lil, hours ago. Since then, of the many omissions there probably are in the foregoing, one seems conspicuous: you can't reason with those who won't reason. When these people are of superior intelligence, the foiled effort becomes a special kind of frustration. People who won't communicate can't be communicated with. If these were to arrange impartial comparison between their behavior and that of officialdom, I think they'd not welcome the conclusion I consider obvious: their approaches were identical and each had a pre-determined conclusion.

H